

Third, we will want to foster respect for international norms in the areas of human rights and the environment. This will be particularly important in our relationship with China.

Fourth, we will continue to seek economic openness, including securing sea lanes of communication. A decision looms before the Senate on whether to extend permanent normal Trade Relations to China.

I support PNTR for China, in part because I believe it is an essential ingredient of an overall strategy which secures a place for us in more prosperous and economically integrated East Asia.

For all of these objectives, maintenance of robust U.S. military capabilities, forward deployed in the region, will be essential, although the composition of those forces is likely to change as their roles and missions evolve. Our forward-deployed forces and the maintenance of strong strategic airlift capabilities at home enable us to respond swiftly and effectively to regional contingencies, humanitarian disasters, and political instability which might impact our vital interests.

Mr. President, as I said at the outset, I think we may be witnessing something extraordinary underway in Northeast Asia. We don't know exactly how it is all going to play out. But we had best begin now to discuss the potential implications. The decisions we make today will shape the strategic environment and the tools we have to advance our interests in East Asia tomorrow.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

#### GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the tragedy that is gun violence.

On May 21, 1998, 15 year-old Kip Kinkel walked into Thurston High School in Springfield, OR and opened fire with a semiautomatic rifle in a crowded cafeteria, killing two classmates and wounding two others. Kinkel had been arrested the day before the shooting for bringing a gun to school. However, police decided that he was not a threat and released him to his parents. The next morning, Kip Kinkel shot his parents to death at home before he went to school and opened fire on his classmates.

The entire state of Oregon went into shock. The Mayor of Springfield called upon lawmakers to institute a mandatory detention period for students caught bringing guns to school. In response, Senator GORDON SMITH and I introduced S. 2169, a bill that would provide a 25 percent increase in juvenile justice prevention funds to those states that implemented a 72-hour detention period for any student who brought a gun to school.

The idea behind the bill is straightforward. If a student brings a gun to school, he or she must be removed from the school and moved to a secure place

where the student can be evaluated and the community protected.

A month later, on July 23, 1999 Senator SMITH and I offered a modified version of S. 2169 as an amendment to the Senate Commerce-Justice-State Appropriations bill. The "24 Hour Rapid Response for Kids who Bring a Gun to School," amendment passed unanimously. Unfortunately, conservative House members, with close ties to the National Rifle Association, objected to any so called "gun measures" on the bill, and the amendment was removed.

On May 19, 1999, Senators SMITH, HATCH, and I teamed up to offer a revised version of the 24-hour Rapid Response amendment to S. 254, the Juvenile Justice bill. The amendment was accepted by the bill managers. Sadly, the bill has languished in the Conference Committee since that time.

Consequently, I have offered the 24-hour Rapid Response amendment on S. 1134, the Education Savings Act and S. 2, the Educational Opportunities Act, and will continue to offer it until such time that schools are safe for all our children. This is not about guns. It's about safety.

Since this amendment has not been enacted and because the legislation that would give law enforcement the tools to stop gun violence have been stalled, I come to the floor today to continue reading the names of those who fallen to gun violence.

Following are the names of some of the people who were killed by gunfire one year ago today, June 22, 1999:

Sean Atkins, 33, Baltimore, MD; Cedric Biglow, 22, Oklahoma City, OK; Michael A. Clifton, 35, Chicago, IL; Dredunn Cooper, 20, Houston, TX; Max Johnson, 28, Dallas, TX; Willie Ray Lewis, 23, New Orleans, LA; Rico Mosley, 19, Atlanta, GA; Richard Neely, 75, Chicago, IL; James Edward Shea, 75, Cape Coral, FL; Steve Taylor, 25, Philadelphia, PA; Joel A. Thompson, 20, Chicago, IL; Michael Williams, Atlanta, GA; Marduke Jones, Detroit, MI

#### NATIONAL EARLY LITERACY SCREENING INITIATIVE

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, recently, the National Reading Panel submitted its report to Congress. That report shows the best current research on how children learn to read. One of the significant studies included in the research is the product of the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development. The research actually began as a result of the 1985 Health Research Extension Act which charged NICHD with the research task of finding out why children have trouble learning to read.

The U.S. Department of Education reports a 42% increase in the number of students with specific learning disabilities receiving special education services over the past decade, with 2.7 million students ages 6-21 currently being served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. As many as 90 percent of these students have signifi-

cant, if not primary, special education needs in the area of reading.

In the NICHD study, one of the most important discoveries was that 90-95% of those children with reading difficulties could be on track with their peers by third grade if they are identified at an early age and given the appropriate training. And that, Mr. President, is the greatest step we can make toward successful learning for these children.

Currently, there is no readily available, scientifically based, easy-to-use screening tool to test children for reading readiness skills. And, there is no coordinated effort for parents and other early care providers to identify children who show signs of early literacy difficulties and to provide them research-based information and support.

The National Center for Learning Disabilities has recently completed a plan to provide parents, early childhood professionals, and other care providers with an easy to use early literacy screening tool, access to information about the critical importance of early oral language and literacy experiences, and resources that will inform and enhance early instruction and learning. The Report to the House-passed version of the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill includes a recommendation that NICHD fund this initiative.

I hope that as we work through the differences in this bill, adequate funds will be provided to NICHD to fund the National Early Literacy Screening Initiative.

#### NOMINATION OF EDWARD GNEHM, JR. FOR AMBASSADOR OF AUSTRALIA

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, this is truly one of the highlights of my Senate career, an instant replay memory I will recall and cherish for a long time to come. For today I was able to read and have approved the nomination of my college roommate to serve as Ambassador. It's something we would have never dreamed we would be a part of back in the days when we were rooming together just down the street from the United States Capitol at George Washington University.

I first met Edward Gnehm, Jr., or "Skip" as everyone has come to know him, years ago and we quickly became friends. In fact, Skip was my fraternity brother and he is the only brother that I have ever had—of any kind—in my life. He was my roommate for three years and he's been my friend ever since. As I hit the books and studied about accounting and business, he was working on learning the nuances of International Relations in the hope that it would help him become a career Ambassador for the United States of America. I watched him work and dedicate his every waking moment to his dream. You can't help but be inspired by someone who has that kind of dedication. He was a brilliant guy, but he

was also modest about it. He had high expectations for his college years—his teachers did, too. Skip's hard work and determination allowed him to exceed and surpass them all. None of us who knew him were surprised by his success.

We graduated from college and then, as the years passed, we took on the challenges of our lives. For me, a career as a small businessman gave way to a second career in politics. For Skip it was one post, one assignment after another, as his work took him literally all over the world.

So much of what I know about the world and the people of different countries comes from having seen so much of it through my friend Skip's eyes. He first served in Katmandu, the capital of Nepal. He also worked in many parts of the Middle East. As Ambassador, he faced danger and showed a unique kind of bravery in Kuwait when Saddam Hussein's Army took up residence across the street. Through it all, Skip never wavered, and he never lost sight of what he most wanted to do—and that was to serve his country to the best of his ability.

That may sound a bit corny to some, but that's all right. In this day and age we need more like him who are dedicated to God, country and family and who live that philosophy from the heart every day. It's called walking your talk and Skip knows all about that. I know that about him because I know him so well. I canoed with him in the swamps of Georgia. You get to know a lot about someone when it's the two of you sharing the experience of being lost in the midst of some mysterious aspect of God's creation. Those are quiet times that lead to thoughtful reflection and a shared focus on the things that are important in life.

Another of the things we have in common was our incredible good fortune in picking a spouse. Skip and his wife Peggy and I and my wife Diana have built a relationship based on trust, cooperation, communication and understanding. That kind of bond has helped Skip and Peggy to serve their country as Ambassadors overseas and it has helped Diana and me to serve the people of Wyoming here in the Senate.

He and I have sons and daughters who are the same age. His son, Ed, is married to the daughter of the couple who introduced me to my wife, Diana. They met at my swearing-in ceremony. The two dads were part of my wedding. And I was there to see their children's marriage in Wyoming.

He recently had a break in his assignments which brought him back to Washington where he served at the State Department. It was always good to see him and to watch him continue to serve in so many different capacities with the same strength, courage and professionalism he brought to any task. On other assignments here, he worked with the Defense Department as State Department Liaison, with Senator KENNEDY on foreign relations

issues and he has also held several other posts. He has served in the United Nations.

Although he was doing well "back home" Skip wanted to get back on the road and head out for another adventure, another challenge in his life. Now, with the action taken by the Senate today, he has received his next call.

I want to thank all of those who made Skip's placement possible. First, let me acknowledge the efforts of CRAIG THOMAS, my friend and colleague from Wyoming, who held hearings on Skip's nomination. He went beyond the call of duty to get his part of the job done in a timely fashion.

Senator HELMS, too, deserves our appreciation for his expeditious work with the full Committee to get the nomination brought before the full Senate for our consideration.

Now, all those years of planning, preparing, and public service have paid off. For Skip, it means another post in an already distinguished career. For us, it means we have a truly dedicated career officer who will be serving us in Australia. I can't think of a better Ambassador and representative of the people of the United States than Skip Gnehm. He will love being there and Australia will love coming to know Skip. It's another perfect match!

#### TRIBUTE TO SERGEANT MAJOR OF THE ARMY ROBERT E. HALL

Mr. THURMOND. Mr. President. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Sergeant Major of the Army (SMA) Robert E. Hall, who will retire today, June 22, 2000. SMA Hall's service to our nation spanned more than 32 years, during which he distinguished himself as a soldier, leader, mentor, and advisor to the Chief of Staff of the Army.

A native of Gaffney, South Carolina, SMA Hall enlisted in the U.S. Army in February 1968. During his more than three decades of loyal service to the nation, he has held and served in every enlisted leadership position from squad leader to command sergeant major. He is a combat tested leader, serving in Desert Shield/Desert Storm with the 24th Infantry Division Artillery as its command sergeant major. Before becoming the 11th Sergeant Major of the United States Army, he was command sergeant major of U.S. Central Command, MacDill Air Force Base, Tampa, Florida. He also served as command sergeant major, 1st Battalion, 5th Air Defense Artillery, Fort Steward, Georgia; Commandant, 24th Infantry Division Noncommissioned Officer Academy, Fort Steward, Georgia; the 24th Division Artillery, Saudi Arabia and Iraq; the 2nd Infantry Division, Korea; and First U.S. Army, Fort Meade, Maryland.

During SMA Hall's tenure as advisor to the Chief of Staff of the Army, he made individual soldiers' issues a priority, focusing on improving the quality of life for them and their families.

He concentrated on providing servicemen and their loved ones with accurate and timely information so that they could make educated and informed decisions about their future in a transforming Army. His personal efforts provided significant assistance and helped to ensure the successful repeal of the REDUX retirement system. In addition, he helped lay the foundation for pay table reform. This was achieved through regular interviews with both internal and external media sources. He also testified and visited with congressmen more than 19 times during his tenure as Sergeant Major of the Army. In doing so, he established a reputation, trust, and rapport with Congress as a caring leader who conveyed the needs of enlisted soldiers.

SMA Hall's distinguished 32-year career epitomizes the consummate professional soldier. But above all, he is a loving and caring husband and father whose service was enhanced by his wife, Carole, and their three children, Apra, Rea, and Jason.

I am certain that my colleagues in the Senate join me in commending SMA Hall on his dedicated service to the nation and the United States Army, and wish him well in his future endeavors.

#### GUN SAFETY CAMPAIGN

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. President, when six-year old Kayla Rolland, from Mt. Morris Township, Michigan, was shot by a fellow classmate, it moved most Americans to tears. Months later, the tears dried and the images faded from view for some, while others turned those tears into action. Of course, the most active group has been the Million Moms, who marched in my home state of Michigan and around the country to demonstrate for safer, more sensible gun laws.

The mothers and others marched on Mothers' Day, 2000 because they are fed up with Congress and our continual failure to pass responsible gun measures that will help protect America's children. Since the school shooting in Colorado, and the more recent one in Michigan, Congress has failed to act, so Americans have started to take gun safety into their own hands. One of those Americans is Joe Yax of Midland, Michigan.

Mr. Yax was driven to action by the school shooting of Kayla Rolland. Yax said he felt nauseated when he first heard news of the shooting, and immediately thought of his own young children, and the unlocked guns he kept at home. Yax told the press that he had always planned to purchase locking devices for his guns, but he never found the time. When young Kayla was shot, not only did Mr. Yax find the time to purchase trigger locks to make his own children safer, Mr. Yax, who is a store employee of the Midwest superstore, Meijer, e-mailed the company's president to see how he could make his community safer.